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Board of Supervisors

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November 6, 2003

To: Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Chair
Supervisor Don Knabe, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David Sanders, Ph.D.
Director

FIRST QUARTERLY REPORT ON AUGUST 5, 2003 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #3: RISK MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

On September 23, 2003, in response to a motion by Supervisor Molina, your Board approved the Department of Children and Family Services Risk Management Techniques and ordered periodic updates to be provided.

- 1. Currently, DCFS is to report back on September 9th their efforts to create a more efficient case file with an efficient file retrieval system. Please consider the model used at MacLaren Children's Center (MCC) where they utilized a Plan of Care that included a child's family, medical, educational and placement history as well as how all needs would be met for every child. DCFS is to report on the feasibility of implementing the Plan of Care.**

The Department has consulted with the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court regarding our initiative to redesign the case plan. We have contacted other jurisdictions to obtain samples of their case plans. We have also formed an internal task force to begin to identify the primary objectives of the case plan and methods of ensuring the family and other community providers are engaged in all aspects of case plan development.

We have made progress during the past 30 days in developing a process to design a new case plan. During discussions between both our internal and external stakeholders, we have generally agreed that the existing case plan needs to be more focused on actions to

be taken by the Department and the impacted family to achieve the stated goals. The fact that the case plan is structured by the confines of Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) presents a challenge. Future meetings will examine options available to overcome the limits presented by the CWS/CMS system.

Our goal is to produce a user-friendly, easily understood document that will function as a strategic plan for the family rather than the existing list of court-imposed mandates. The result will demonstrate the nexus between the system's concern for child safety and the actions necessary to overcome these safety concerns. The present case plan is difficult to read and we believe that the conceptualized case plan will assist the family more fully. We have met with unanimous support for improving the case plan and all stakeholders recognize the challenge to achieve the objective.

- 2. DCFS shall consider the implementation of a negative outcome reporting system, whereby DCFS social workers report any problem, within 24 hours, to DCFS Administration that might impact the safety of the child and create potential liability for the County. DCFS is to report on the feasibility of a system such as the DHS format and protocol.**

The Department is completing the final stage of development of the instrument to compile meaningful statistics on critical incidents including child deaths. The instrument is Excel-based and aggregates information from the CWS/CMS system. The Department will have the ability to track trends and develop meaningful corrective actions, as trends dictate. Further, as the instrument utilizes the CWS/CMS system, it will include pertinent information relevant to critical incidents which and will be readily available when the instrument goes on-line. The system will be validated within two weeks and will provide accurate information for inclusion in the next scheduled Board update.

- 3. Every Social Worker is required to enter each case into a computer database. DCFS shall conduct an audit of this mandate. Please report on the feasibility of this proposed audit on September 9, with a proposed auditing tool and time frame of such an audit, in an effort to ensure that all children's records are properly entered into State-mandated computer systems.**

The Department has completed the first round of auditing in order to establish benchmark performance. The results are being compiled and will be sent to the Board under separate cover by mid-November 2003. Updates will subsequently proceed on a quarterly basis.

- 4. Report on a quarterly basis to the Board, County Counsel, and the Risk Manager Inspector General any recurring risk management issues, such as inadequate documentation, in an effort to analyze and implement systemic changes to ensure the safety of children in every placement.**

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The Department has met with the Risk Management Inspector General and County Counsel and is compiling systemic issues extrapolated from claims and lawsuits filed against our Department, Critical Incidents and Internal Affairs investigations for the period of September 2003 through January 2004 and quarterly, thereafter. As per the response to Directive 2, we are bringing on-line an instrument to compile statistics on Critical Incidents. The Internal Affairs and Litigation Management sections are currently compiling trend data pertinent to the sections. The Department will provide this information to the Board through County Counsel, in closed session, as directed by the Board on September 23, 2003.

The next quarterly report will be provided to the Board on February 5, 2004.

If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may call Helen Berberian at (213) 351-5530.

DS:mv

c: Chief Administrative Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel